### A Peculiar People.

Let us notice a few particulars which distinguish the people of God.

They are peculiar:

1. In their spirit. People of the world are proud—Christians are humble. No matter what their station or talents or circumstances, they are distinguished for their humility. They are never haughty nor proud, nor scornful. They are meek under injuries, patient under provocations, forgiving those who wrong them, cheerful and hopeful in adversity, long-suffering and full of compassion and kindness. In these respects true Christians are peculiar. There has been a great change in their temper and disposition in many respects. They are unlike the world and unlike their former selves.

2. In their aims. They live to do good and not simply to enjoy life. They strive to lay up for themselves treasures in heaven instead of treasures on earth. They seek to please God rather than men.

3. They are peculiar in their manner of living. No matter how poor, they are neat and clean; no matter how rich, they are not luxuriant and extravagant. They make no show, no ostentatious display; in everything they are models of simplicity. Whether they need to or not, they practice economy that they may have means to relieve the destitute and to promote God's blessed cause.

4. They are peculiar in their dress. While they do not wear uniforms like soldiers, yet they wear nothing for ornament. They obey both the letter and spirit of God's command, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart in that which is not corruptible even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." 1 Pet. 3, 3–4. The doctrine taught by so many preachers that it matters not how one dresses, he can be a Christian as well in finery, as in a plain dress, is plainly unscriptural. It is a flat contradiction of the Bible. Such preachers have but very inadequate ideas of the responsibility resting upon them. A saint does not feel like a sinner, he does not act like a sinner, and it is equally plain that he does not look like a sinner.

5. True Christians are peculiar in their conversation. They do not talk like other people. They speak a pure language. As becometh saints, let not "filthiness nor foolish talking nor jesting," "be once named among you; but rather giving of thanks." In any general, social gathering a person who observes this precept will be peculiar. His language may be the same in its gramatical construction which other people use, but the candor, seriousness and charity, which characterizes the conversation of a saint, makes him observed wherever he may be.

6. They are peculiar in their amusements. They do not go to the world for their pleasures. They find their enjoyments in the service of God—in worshiping Him, in doing good to their fellow-men and trying to make them virtuous and happy.—EARNEST CHRISTIAN.

### Christianity the Help and Hope of Our Race.

In far-off India I have found missonaries (perhaps you would call them "fanatics"!) picked up poor, little waifs thrown by the roadside to die, gathering them into orphanages, and teaching them in schools. In China, when whole provinces were swept by famine; when thousands of wretched creatures lined the roadside, streaching out their gaunt arms for bread; it was American missionaries who came to their relief, more than one of whom perished in these heroic labors, dying that others might live. But neither in China nor in India, nor anywhere else on the other side of the globe, did I find a skeptic so filled with the enthusiasm of humanity as to devote himself to feeding the hungry or clothing the naked or, with all his fine phrases, putting himself out of the way to relieve or help a single human creature. When I saw how your philosophers avoided every opportunity of heroic sacrifice what could I infer but that some secret deadening power within them snapped their manhood and rendered them incapable of great acts of devotion? Why is it that religion only inspires these rugged virtues? "The tree is known by its fruits." That is the best faith which produces the most of practical goodness, of human sympathy, of kindness and charity.

And so it is that Christianity, weakened as it has been in its influence by the infirmities and treacheries of its professed disciples, still, in spite of all, has had a great history. Its course through the ages is as marked as that of the Gulf Stream through the ocean, tempering the sea and air, carrying a new climate to another hemisphere, and sending its warmth over distant shores. And that Christianity "still lives"; the religion which came with Christ and bears his name, is still the light and the life of the world—the source and spring of all that is best in modern civilization; of all that makes Europe and America different from Asia and Africa. On it depends the future of humanity. I will not say, with writers like Lamennais or the Russian Count Tolstoi, that Christ is the Great Communist; but I do say that if government is ever to be anything else than organized injustice—if society is ever abandoned his school and opened a law office. The money he had received for teaching, together with his fees for legal services, justified him in applying to the Supreme Court for a license to practice law.

In seven years from the date of his application he occupied a seat upon the Supreme Court bench, and in ten years he went back to the East as a member of Congress. His subsequent career as a United States Senator, a leader of the Democratic party, and a Presidential candidate, is well known. Doubtless it is spotted with errors and faults, for he was but a man; but it illustrates that honor and fame come to him who instead of repining at his situation, uses it as a fulcrum.—YOUTH'S COMPANION.

### So Many Calls.

It was a brisk, clear evening, in the latter part of December, when Mr. Absum returned from his counting-house to the comforts of a bright coal-fire and warm arm-chair in his parlor at home. He changed his heavy boots for slippers, drew around him the folds of his evening gown, and then, lounging back in his chair, looked up to the ceiling, and about, with an air of satisfaction. Still there was a cloud on his brow. What could be the matter with Mr. Absum? To tell the truth, he had that afternoon received in his counting-room the agent of one of the principal charities of the day, and had been warmly urged to double his last year's subscription, and the urging had been pressed by statements and arguments to which he did not know well how to reply. "People think," soliloquized he to himself, "that I am made of money, I believe; this is the fourth object this year for which I have been requested to double my subscription, and this year has been one of heavy family expenses—building and fitting up this house—carpets, curtains—no end to new things to be bought—I really do not see how I am to give a cent more in charity. Then there are the bills for the girls and the boys; they all say they must have twice as much as before we came into this new house; wonder if I did right in building it?"—and Mr Absum glanced up and down the ceiling and around on the costly furniture, and looked into the fire in silence. He was tired, harassed, and drowsy; his head began to swim, and his eyes closed—he was asleep. In his sleep he thought he heard a tap at the door; he opened it; and there stood a plain, poor-looking man, who, in a voice singularly low and sweet, asked for a few moment's conversation with him. Mr. Absum asked him into the parlor, and drew him a chair near the fire. The stranger looked attentively around, and then, turning to Mr. Absum, presented him with a paper.

"It is your last year's subscription to missions,' said he: "you know all of the wants of that cause that can be told you. I called to see if you had anything more to add to it."

This was said in the same low and quiet voice as before; but, for some reason unaccountable to himself, Mr. Absum was more embarrassed by the plain, poor, unpretending man, than he had been in the presence of any one before. He was for some minutes silent before he could reply at all, and then, in a hurried and embarrassed manner, he began the excuses which had appeared so satisfactory to him the afternoon before—the hardiness of the times, the difficulty of collecting money, family expenses, etc.

The stranger quietly surveyed the spacious apartment, with its many elegancies and luxuries, and without any comment took from the merchant the paper he had given, but immediately presented him with another.

"This is your subscription to the Tract Society. Have you anything to add to it? You know how much it has been doing, and how much more it now desires to do, if Christians would only furnish means. Do you not feel called upon to add something to it?"

Mr. Absum was very uneasy under this appeal; but there was something in the mild manner of the stranger that restrained him, and he answered that, although he regretted it exceedingly, his circumstances were such that he could not this year conveniently add to *any* of his charities.

The stranger received back the paper without any reply, but immediately presented in its place the subscription to the Bible Society, and in a few clear and forcible words reminded him of its well-known claims, and again requested him to add something to his donation. Mr. Absum became impatient.

"Have I not said," he replied, "that I can do *nothing more* for any charity than I did last year? There seems to be no end to the calls upon us in these days. At first there were only three or four objects presented, and the sums required were moderate. Now the objects increase every day; all call upon us for money; and all, after we have given once, want us to double and treble our subscriptions. There is no end to the thing; we may as well stop in one place as another."

The stranger took back the paper, and fixed his eye upon his companion, said, in a voice that thrilled to his soul:

"One year ago to-night you thought your daughter lay dying, you could not sleep for agony. Upon whom did you call that night?"

The merchant started and looked up. There seemed a change to have passed over the whole form of his visitor, whose eyes were fixed upon him with a calm, intense, penetrating expression, that awed and subdued him. He drew back, covered his face, and made no reply.

"Five years ago," said the stranger, "when you lay at the brink of the grave, and thought that if you died then you would leave a family of helpless children entirely unprovided for, do you remember how you prayed? Who saved you then?"

The stranger paused for an answer; but there was a dead silence. The merchant only bent forward as one entirely overcome, and raised his head on the seat before him.

The stranger drew yet nearer, and said, in a still lower and more impressive tone, "Do you remember, fifteen years since—*that time* when you felt yourself so lost, so helpless, so hopeless; when you spent days and nights in prayer; when you thought you would give the world for one hour's assurance that your sins were forgiven you? Who listened to you then?"

"It was my God and Savior!" said the merchant, with a sudden burst of remorseful feeling. "O, yes, it was he!"

"And has *He* ever complained of being called upon too often?" inquired the stranger, in a tone of reproachful sweetness. "Say," he added, "are you willing to begin this night, and ask no more of *Him*, if *He* from this night will ask no more from you?"

"O, never, never!" said the merchant, throwing himself at the stranger's feet; but, as he spoke these words, the figure of his visitor seemed to vanish, and he awoke with his whole soul stirred within him.

"O, my Savior! what have I been saying?" he exclaimed. "Take all—take everything! What is all that I have to what thou hast done for me?"—CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE.

It is a good sign when the Lord blows off the blossoms of our forward hopes in this life and taps the branches of our worldly joys to the very root, on purpose that they should not thrive. Lord, spoil my fool's heaven in this life, that I may be saved forever.—*S. Rutherford.*